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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
SAN FRANCISCO

JOHN F. SHELLEY

January 25, 1967

Professor Victor Jones
8 Greenwood Court
Berkeley, California

Dear Victor:

Enclosed is a draft of the statement I believe Mayor Shelley will make at the morning session of the Conference on Regional Government which is to be held this Saturday.

I am sending this to you because it may be helpful in focusing some of the discussion during the day.

Sincerely,

T. J. Kent, Jr.
T. J. Kent, Jr.
Deputy for Development

Enc.

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REGIONAL HOME RULE OR SUPER-GOVERNMENT BY FRAGMENTATION

Statement by
John F. Shelley
Mayor of San Francisco

Presented at "Bay Area Town Meeting" sponsored by the
League of Women Voters of San Francisco and the Urban
Life Institute of the University of San Francisco,
January 28, 1967

The initiative of the League of Women Voters of San Francisco in organizing this Town Meeting is very much appreciated. Now that the specific ABAG proposal for a unified, limited-function regional government is before the citizens of the Bay Area, public debate on the merits of the proposal is the next essential step. This is what the League and its cosponsors are making possible today.

In representing the point of view of the larger cities, I would like to make a brief opening statement. The points I will emphasize express the officially-approved policies of the City and County of San Francisco. However, from what I have learned during the past year of cooperative work as a member of the Goals Committee of ABAG, I know it is correct to say that Oakland and San Jose have generally similar ideas, and that, on most points, a majority of the smaller cities and the counties also are in accord.

1. Fragmented regional government already exists in the Bay Area. Since 1947, we have created five single-purpose special districts. They are not coordinated.
2. ABAG has called attention to four additional regional needs that exist now. Regional refuse disposal, open space, airport, and planning needs must be faced.

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3. San Francisco is opposed to the creation of any new special districts. They diffuse citizen control. They weaken local government.
4. San Francisco is in favor of the ABAG proposal to create a unified, limited-function Bay Area government. We are in favor of the "regional home rule" approach.
5. San Francisco is in favor of debating the ABAG proposal -- and any other specific proposal -- during the present session of the Legislature. Many of us have been engaged in cooperative regional efforts for years. We believe the main issues are clear now. We realize that the ABAG proposal is imperfect -- that it can and should be strengthened. If the Legislature decides not to act this year, the ABAG proposal will be studied further, and will be considered again next year. But, if we try now, we may find that we can create a regional government in 1967.
6. Speaking as the Mayor of San Francisco, I believe the larger central cities have four specific needs that are of particular importance to them:
 - a. From our point of view, the Bay Area has a serious regional housing problem. If we are to strengthen the Bay Area's traditionally cosmopolitan social attitudes and outlook, cities and suburban communities throughout the region will have to increase housing opportunities for families of all income groups and all races. The new regional government should face

this regional housing problem. The entire Bay Area will suffer if we fail to do this as soon as possible.

- b. The governing body of the new regional government should be proportionate to population. The ABAG proposal now provides for this.
- c. The governing body of the new regional government should be modified, after it has been established, so that at least half of its members are directly elected by the people on a district basis. This is needed to make the governing body more responsive, and to assure region-wide public debate on major issues at least every two years.
- d. Finally, the larger cities have a strong interest in keeping the regional government limited. Those of us who believe that municipal home rule provides the best solutions for local problems and the greatest degree of citizen participation and control, must be assured that the new regional government will remain confined and limited to critical regional problems. The ABAG proposal now provides safeguards that are designed to do just this.

I have supported cooperative regional efforts for many years. During the past year, it has been a great privilege to participate in the intensive study of regional needs that has been carried out by ABAG under the leadership of Mr. Robert Miller, Vice Mayor of San Jose. I am particularly pleased that the San Francisco policy statement, which I submitted to the Board of Supervisors in March of 1966, and which the members of the Board approved unanimously, has served the purpose we had in mind. It

seemed necessary at that time for someone to take the lead so that others could react and reconsider their own policies. Most of the key policies in the San Francisco statement are now embodied in the ABAG proposal.

If we do not act soon to create a regional home rule government for the Bay Area, we can expect to hear ever-increasing and ever-stronger demands for additional single-purpose special districts. And, if more special districts are created, we will find ourselves confronted with a state-dominated, uncoordinated, fragmented super-government.

It is my hope that those who are seriously interested in creating a Bay Area regional government will concentrate now on the specific and constructive proposal that has been developed by ABAG. We already have a Bill in the legislature to consider. Let us proceed to debate the real issues.

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